

REMARKS

The application is amended to remove the presentation of duplicate "Description of Drawings" headings and figure descriptions in the application as originally filed. No new matter is included with this Amendment.

The corresponding International Patent Application No. PCT/US 04/001489, filed January 21, 2004, received a favorable International Search Report and Written Opinion. The International Search Report identified only one reference, United States Patent No. 6,017,742 to Takenishi et al. The reference is categorized as a Category "A" document defining the general state of the art. The Written Opinion indicated that all of claims 1-24 possess the novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability necessary for patentability because the prior art does not teach or suggest the method altering the properties of a capillary-pore membrane as claimed in the application.

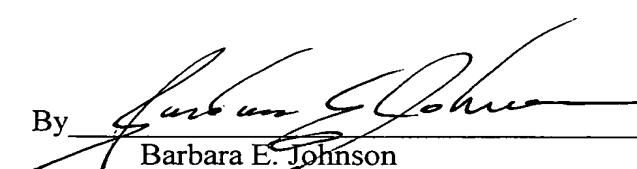
CONCLUSION

Examination and allowance of claims 1-24 are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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